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In This Issue

FARM OUTPUT AT RECORD HIGH

A continuing record livestock production combined with a near record crop production, promises to add up to an alltime high farm output in 1955.

Based chiefly on August 1 indications, the total outturn of crops and livestock probably will be 4.6 percent greater than the previous record of 1953 and 1954, and 13 percent greater than the 1947–49 average.

Demand for farm products continues at a high level with rising consumer incomes. However, with large supplies of many commodities, grower prices so far this year have averaged 4 percent below the first 7 months of 1954.

Production of livestock and livestock products will be slightly greater than the former high in 1954. According to reports as of August 1, crop production is expected to be about 6 percent greater than in 1954 and as large as the record outturn of 1948.

The chief factor responsible for the increased production of livestock and products is the prospect of a record output of meat animals. Production of hogs continues to increase rapidly. It is approaching a peacetime peak. Pro-

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duction of cattle and calves will equal last year's record high.

Because of a record outturn of milk per cow, production of dairy products will remain at the alltime high set last year despite a slight decline in cow numbers.

Output of poultry products probably will decline about 2 percent from last year's high, owing largely to a reduction in the number of chickens and turkeys raised.

The total number of livestock breeding units on farms January 1, 1955, was the third largest of record, and was exceeded only in 1943 and 1944. Production per livestock breeding unit continues near the high point reached in 1953.

Record Yield Per Acre

The total crop acreage planted to provide this year's large production is only slightly less than in 1954 and also slightly smaller than in 1948. If the weather continues to be favorable, the average yield per acre harvested will be the largest ever recorded and 9 percent greater than a year earlier.

Record or near-record production is in prospect for most of the major groups of crops. Production of feed grains will be greatly increased over last year with record crops of oats and sorghum grain and near-record crops of corn and barley. Texas and Kansas, alone, are expected to almost match last year's national production of sorghum grain. Tonnage of hay produced will be the largest of record.

Combined output of hay and forage crops may equal the previous record reached in 1942. Improved pastures plus record production of feed grains and near-record outturn of hay and forage will be more than adequate to meet the feed requirements of the large number of livestock on farms.

Feed used by horses and mules will be less than half of that used in 1947–49, making more feed available to produce meat, dairy, and poultry products.

Oil crops will show the greatest increase from last year of any crop group. Production of soybeans will increase around 77 million bushels, or 23 percent, while production of peanuts will increase 50 percent.

Despite frost damage to peaches and pecans in the Southeastern States, the total production of fruits and nuts promises to be larger than a year earlier. Total production of vegetables will be up from last year but still 10 percent smaller than the record 1946 production.

Food Grains Decrease

Downward adjustments in production from last year are indicated for food grains, cotton, and sugar crops largely because of the acreage allotment program. Prospects are that production of food grains will decrease more than any other crop group chiefly because of an 11-percent reduction in acreage.

Wheat and rice growers sharply reduced planting in compliance with acreage allotments and marketing quota programs. Prospects for a record high yield per acre on 14 percent fewer acres than in 1954, would mean 7 percent fewer bales of cotton.

Generally favorable growing conditions plus increasing use by farmers of improved production practices appear to be the chief factors behind the large volume of output expected this year.

Donald D. Durost
Agricultural Research Service

The Agricultural Situation is sent free to crop, livestock, and price reporters in connection with their reporting work.

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Livestock Feeders Can Usually Find Some "BARGAINS"

When can you livestock feeders get the most for your money in buying feed grains? What feed grains are "bargain" buys during what months?

The longtime average prices per 100 pounds for the four major feed grains—corn, oats, barley, and sorghum—are fairly close together.

However, from season to season and from one year to the next, it's a different picture. Let's take a look at some of these comparisons.

Prices of oats and barley are comparatively low in the summer when these two crops are harvested. On the other hand, the price of corn is usually high at that season—just before a new crop of corn is harvested.

As for sorghum grains, which are harvested earlier than corn especially in the South, the price is generally low relative to corn during July–October.

This year, large crops of oats and barley are again being harvested and price supports of the 1955 crops are lower than in 1954. Prices of oats and barley have declined sharply relative to corn since last spring, and they have been a cheap source of livestock feed in many areas this summer.

In July, the average price received by farmers per 100 pounds for oats was only 75 percent, and barley 80 percent, of the average price received for corn.

The average price of sorghum grains also has declined relative to corn since last spring, dropping from 96 percent of the price of corn in May, to 78 percent in mid-July.

Comparisons below do not allow for grinding or other processing operations which might be necessary for one grain and not another. They also would be influenced by types and quality of the different grains and by the kinds of livestock to which the grains are fed. More detailed information on feeding value is contained in USDA Circular 836, Consumption of Feed by Livestock.

Malcolm Clough
Agricultural Marketing Service

HOW TO COMPARE FEED PRICES

[Prices of oats, barley, and sorghum grain equivalent to the specified levels of corn prices after adjusting for differences in weight and feeding value]

If CORN price per bushel is—	Here's a rough idea of what you can pay for—		
	OATS (per bushel)	BARLEY (per bushel)	SORGHUM GRAIN (per 100 pounds)
$1.00	$0.51	$0.81	$1.79
$1.10	.57	.90	1.96
$1.20	.62	.98	2.14
$1.30	.67	1.06	2.32
$1.40	.72	1.14	2.50
$1.50	.77	1.22	2.68
$1.60	.82	1.30	2.86
$1.70	.87	1.38	3.04

Reader's Digest*

Says in it's August 1955 Edition

DRAMA BEHIND THE CROP FORECASTS

By Ira Wolfert

Under armed guard, behind locked doors, amazingly accurate predictions are made, instantly affecting farmers, food processors, railroads, truckers, and consumers.

A CLIMACTIC moment in the intricate processes by which our free economy lives and prospers comes, in Washington, on the tenth of each month or the workday next following. That is when the Crop Reporting Board gathers behind locked doors, under armed guard, to predict with amazing accuracy the Nation's food production in the months ahead.

The Board's forecasts are only estimates, hedged with the proviso that the weather will remain "normal." Yet the information is so important and modern statistical methods have made the predictions so nearly accurate that everybody must receive the report at the same time. If any of the contents were to leak out, even minutes too soon, speculators could turn that knowledge into fortunes, as farm prices are instantaneously affected by the estimates.

The Board must forecast in specific figures the yield of nearly 500 products growing on America's 5,382,162 farms. Take Florida citrus fruit, for instance. During the 3 summer months canners and packers are busy marketing canned or frozen orange and grapefruit juice from the previous season. Since these inventories are destined for future retail sale, their value depends largely on the size and quality of the crops to come. Herbert Massey of Dade City, whose company cans and freezes orange juice, told me that one summer $2 million in his warehouse turned into thin air, chiefly because of a falling price—based on the Board forecast of a citrus crop that had barely started growing.

Who can foretell what you will pay for a broiler 4 months from today? Chicken farmers can. A series of calculations—correlating the Board's estimates on eggs set out to hatch with figures for previous years and with figures for meat that will compete with chicken—provides a remarkably accurate indication of prices to come.

Crop-destroying weather always blows up a wild storm among traders, each trying to outguess the others and all driving up the price. Last spring a late frost caused the retail price of potatoes to double in 2 weeks. But the Board's prediction of the quantity of potatoes that would survive that frost and reach the market in May calmed the March storm and forced the price down. Such is the Board's prestige that few doubted its accuracy.

That prestige is worldwide. In one recent year 22 nations sent specialists here to study the Board's methods. Countries as far apart agriculturally as Germany and Turkey, Japan and Puerto Rico, have borrowed Agricultural Estimates Division experts to help

them set up organizations for similar forecasting operations.

The primary purpose of crop forecasting is to guide farmers in deciding how much of what to produce and when to sell it. The job now costs about $4 million of Federal funds a year. But the heart of it is provided free by some 600,000 crop reporters: A carefully selected cross-section of farmers who voluntarily fill out questionnaires on what they are raising and how it is progressing. Their reports go to agricultural statisticians in 41 field offices covering 48 States who, in turn, on the basis of this information, mail "recommendations" to the Secretary of Agriculture.

It is these recommendations that the national Board collates and reduces to official estimates. The envelopes wait unopened in a United States mail box in Washington, D. C. It has two locks and there is only one key for each in existence. Sterling Newell, Director of the Division of Agricultural Estimates and permanent chairman of the Board, has one; a representative of Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Benson has the other.

One hardly thinks of statistics as high drama. But when I was permitted to witness the monthly crop-reporting climax I found myself in an atmosphere of muffled excitement. There was a touch of solemn ritual about the procedure.

We met at dawn. "Everybody here?" asked Newell. Everybody was, including the armed guards. We crossed Independence Avenue to the Department of Agriculture's vast South Building. The mail box was opened and we followed Newell as he carried the envelopes to the second floor of the fourth wing.

There are "Lock-Up Day" signs everywhere, and guards circulate through the rooms to warn anyone who might be around. As soon as all the Board members have entered the corridor Newell raises his arm and drops it. At that signal the doors at each end of the corridor are shut and bolted. Thereafter, until 3 p. m. when the report is issued, it would take an Act of Congress to get anyone out.

Once the doors were shut on a man who had an appointment at the White House that day, and word was sent to the President's office by a guard that the man was detained. Another time a young woman emerged from the ladies' room just too late, and she had to remain, an embarrassed and angry captive. A doctor, if needed, can get in, but he can't get out until unlocking time. All telephones are disconnected. Every window is covered with a venetian blind. A steel bar to hold the slats rigidly in place is anchored to each blind and sealed with a metal stamp.

The day I was there, 6 members of the Board—3 Washington section chiefs who serve permanently and 3 field men whose identity changes every month—toiled with pencils over regression charts and correlation sheets. It was hot, and the windows beyond the venetian blinds were open. What if I had an accomplice outside? Could I somehow slip a message to him? But guards patrol the wing outside, watching the windows. So thorough are the security measures that not even an attempt to breach them has been made since they were put into effect 50 years ago.

By about 2:45 p. m. the Board's work is done, and the Secretary of Agriculture comes into the room. He glances over the report briefly, discussing with the Board members significant or unexpected developments. When all points have been thoroughly covered, he signs the report. Meanwhile mimeographed copies of the report have been run off and girls in the office have stacked them up ready for the press.

The doors are then unbolted and opened. Chairman Newell and the Secretary and a few members of the Board emerge. In accordance with the instructions that govern them "looking neither to right nor left and speaking to no one nor acknowledging any greeting" they cross the hall to the release room.

In this room, telephone and telegraph wires have been connected with the offices of press associations and

other interested organizations. Reporters, having warned their contacts to stand by, take up positions on a white line about 6 feet from their telephone booths. Newell places one copy of the report face down beside each phone and telegraph instrument. Half a minute before 3 o'clock a representative of the Secretary calls "Get ready!" Silence falls. Everyone watches an electric clock on the wall. When the second hand reaches 3 the word "Go!" is cried. The newsmen snatch up the reports, and the news of how things are going with man's battle against nature is sped to the waiting world.

Oscar McIntyre, a 64-year-old Wyoming rancher and one of the 600,000 volunteer crop-reporters, is an example of the support the program has enjoyed for 92 years. One day when he was due to mail the livestock report for his farm a blizzard was blowing which made driving risky, so he rode horseback the 22 miles through 5-foot snowdrifts to the nearest post office.

A State statistician told me of being summoned one day to the deathbed of a farmer who had been a crop reporter for 40 years. He wanted help in making out his last report.

Not all are so dedicated, of course. The average return on 600,000 questionnaires in recent years has been about 30 percent, but lately, at the Board's request, mail-order specialists have improved the response by tricks of their trade. Test runs with a new type of questionnaire have increased returns as much as 40 percent over previous response.

How do the crop reporters make their estimates? Few can be wholly accurate, but strange talents do exist among men close to the soil. There are, for example, fruit cruisers who by walking through an orchard, can estimate the total amount of fruit on the trees with amazing accuracy.

Onions grow in black muck land, covered by ooze. The Department of Agriculture has a statistician who can walk into a field, grub around for a few minutes with one finger, exposing bulbs here and there, count the rows, and then tell you almost exactly what quantity of onions will come out of that field.

Most consumers are so accustomed to well-stocked grocery stores that they seldom think of the extensive planning, time, and cost necessary to provide such variety and abundance of food for the Nation's table. Crop forecasts by the Crop Reporting Board help 5 million farm operators in the planning and marketing of their crops. These estimates also make it possible for railroads, the trucking industry, mills, elevators, gins, and warehouses, to take care of the farmers' crops and livestock properly. And millions of consumers find these statistics valuable as a guide to knowing when it is a good time to stock up for the deep freeze or for canning. Crop reporting, in brief, is a vital cog in the Nation's economy.

—Ezra Taft Benson
Secretary of Agriculture.

But there is not enough of such human talent to go around, and continuous efforts are made to find mathematical formulæ that will help correct errors made by crop reporters. This is the responsibility of the State statisticians. I watched some of these men at their work, and it is impressive.

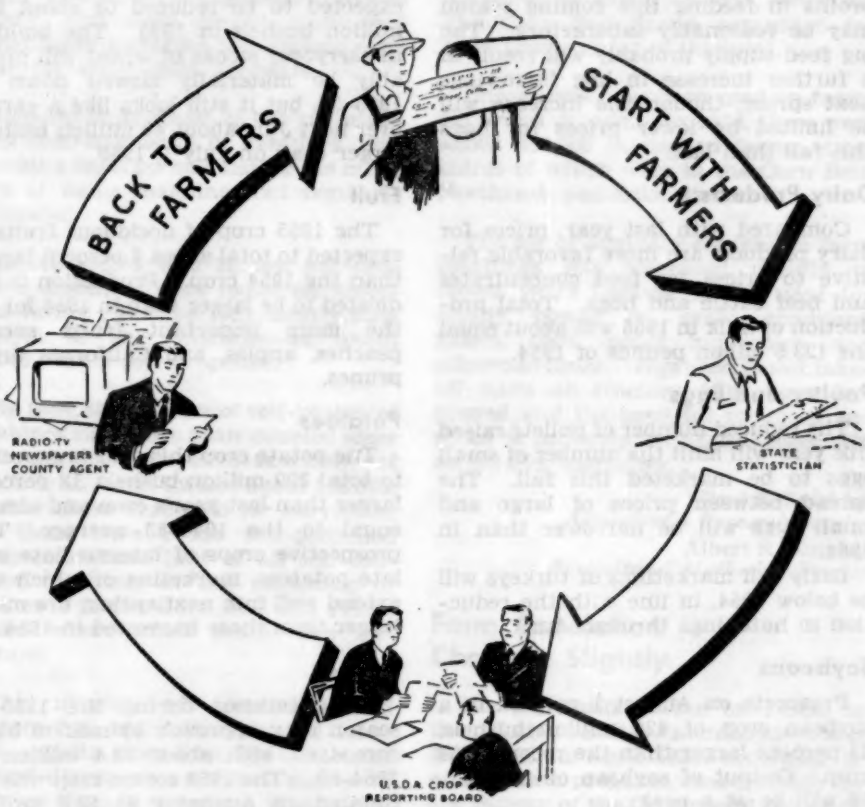
They tour the croplands once a month. Their trained eyes peel back the land's green cover and expose a jungle world of surging life struggling to grow. The statistician checks his reporters' estimates with his own. He also checks with produce men who maintain regular contact with their source of supply, country bankers who have a good insight into how their loans are making out, freight agents who know how many trains they must have on hand when the harvest comes. His final recommendation is therefore far from guesswork.

Next, each member of the Board compares the returns from all 48 States with his own information and judgments. At a final meeting around a

large table presided over by Newell, each member's forecast is then checked against all the rest. Differences are argued until the report is unanimous.

In the decades before the 1930's errors of 20 to 30 percent were common in forecasts during the months before the crop reached a mature stage; today the Board has reduced the error of its forecasts by 50 percent. In forecasts made after a crop matures, errors dwindle, and frequently the estimates hit the figures on the nose.

The Crop Reporting Board is held in high esteem by those who know the difficulties of the enterprise. Yet it deserves greater understanding and appreciation by the country at large, for the ultimate beneficiary of the drama I witnessed in Washington is the consumer.



YOUR CROP AND LIVESTOCK REPORTING SERVICE GETS FACTS FOR YOU ON FARM PRODUCTION - STOCKS - PRICES

Outlook

Production prospects currently point to a record output of farm products this year—possibly 4 to 5 percent above 1954 if weather continues favorable.

Livestock

Strong demand will likely support prices of feeder cattle this fall, and profits in feeding this coming season may be reasonably satisfactory. The big feed supply probably will result in a further increase in hog farrowings next spring, though the increase will be limited by lower prices for hogs this fall than last.

Dairy Products

Compared with last year, prices for dairy products are more favorable relative to prices for feed concentrates and beef cattle and hogs. Total production of milk in 1955 will about equal the 123.5 billion pounds of 1954.

Poultry and Eggs

The reduced number of pullets raised this year will limit the number of small eggs to be marketed this fall. The spread between prices of large and small eggs will be narrower than in 1954.

Early fall marketings of turkeys will be below 1954, in line with the reduction in hatchings through April.

Soybeans

Prospects on August 1 pointed to a soybean crop of 420 million bushels, 23 percent larger than the record 1954 crop. Output of soybean oil in 1955–56 will be at a peak.

Feed

With the second-largest corn crop in prospect, corn prices are expected to decline further this fall and prices of all feed grains are likely to continue somewhat lower than a year earlier. Production of feed grains was estimated in August at 140 million tons, the largest of record. This would leave a carryover at the close of the 1955–56 season well above the record of about 39 million tons expected at the beginning.

Wheat

As the result of acreage allotments and marketing quotas, production is expected to be reduced to about 911 million bushels in 1955. The buildup in carryover stocks of wheat will probably be materially slowed down in 1955–56, but it still looks like a carryover next July about 40 million bushels larger than on July 1, 1955.

Fruit

The 1955 crop of deciduous fruits is expected to total about 4 percent larger than the 1954 crop. Production is indicated to be larger than in 1954 for all the more important fruits except peaches, apples, and California dried prunes.

Potatoes

The potato crop this year is expected to total 399 million bushels, 12 percent larger than last year's crop and almost equal to the 1944–53 average. The prospective crops of intermediate and late potatoes, marketing of which will extend well into next spring, are much larger than those harvested in 1954.

Cotton

Disappearance during the 1955–56 season may approach 13 million bales compared with about 12.4 million in 1954–55. The 1955 cotton crop was estimated on August 1 at 12.6 million running bales.

Tobacco

The 1956 acreage of flue-cured tobacco will be down, since next year's acreage allotments have been reduced 12 percent.

Exports will increase in 1955–56 as sizable quantities will move out under the new export programs.

OLD GRAY MARE

Just "Ain't" . . .

The old gray mare "ain't" what she used to be on the farm. At least, you just don't find nearly as many, what with the big increase of mechanical horsepower.

Fact is, old Maud would be rather puzzled in this modern age of tractors, grain combines, cornpickers, pickup balers, and field forage harvesters which have increased in numbers each year for more than 10 years.

Reports from about 25,000 voluntary crop correspondents in February 1954 provide a basis for calculating the numbers of many machines not regularly estimated.

Before World War II, few self-propelled machines were found on American farms. But, by 1951, nearly one-twelfth of the combines—or about 63,000 —were self-propelled.

By 1954, the number of self-propelled combines had more than doubled since 1951, and self-propelled machines of all kinds on farms totaled about 165,000. Most of these were used for harvesting but there were a few self-propelled sprayers. About half of all self-propelled machines at the beginning of 1954 were in the Corn Belt and Plains States where small grains are important.

The number of tractor-powered mowers has more than tripled since 1945. At the same time, the number of ground-driven mowers has decreased by more than 50 percent. When tractors first came into general use, many of the ground-driven horse mowers were used with tractors. Tractor-mounted and semimounted mowers are now used to cut most of our big hay crop.

Numbers of side-delivery rakes have increased markedly since 1947. Improved rakes tend to reduce leaf loss even at higher raking speeds. The number on farms on January 1, 1954, is estimated at 1,175,000. Around 55 percent of these were in the Corn Belt and Lake States.

Lawn mowing on farms is rapidly becoming mechanized. Farmers owned about 1.2 million power lawn mowers, according to January 1, 1954, estimates. The Corn Belt States accounted for more than a third of the total.

Chain saws have been used on farms for over a decade. By 1954, there were about 250,000 in use on farms—two-thirds of which were in the Corn Belt, Northeast, and Lake States.

The use of auxiliary engines on farm machines has increased rapidly in recent years because of the need for steady power on grain combines, balers, field forage harvesters, and other machines. However, power take-off units on tractors have been improved and the need for mounted engines is probably declining, especially on smaller machines.

Paul E. Strickler
Agricultural Research Service
Albert R. Kendall
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Farm Population Changes Slightly

The population living on farms in the United States numbered about 22,158,000 in April 1955, according to an estimate prepared cooperatively by the Bureau of the Census and the Agricultural Marketing Service. This figure is not significantly different from the corresponding estimate of 21,890,000 for 1954 and represents a drop of approximately 3,000,000 from 1950.

The drop in farm population between 1950 and 1955 represents a continuation of the longtime downward trend, which has reduced the number of farm residents to 13.5 percent of the total population by 1955.

"OLD MAN HAY" Holds High Place

Among Our Farm Crops

Among the farm crops, hay is a quiet steady fellow whose main job is helping feed the livestock. He seldom gets to the city and never visits a board of trade for speculation as do corn, cotton, wheat, or soybeans. Nor has he ever claimed a price prop.

But for all this backwardness, farmers and stockmen regard him highly. They count on him to cheapen feed bills and help them through hard winters—and in summers when pastures are dry and burned.

So it may be worthwhile to take another look at this dependable crop to appraise its place in American agriculture.

Next to Corn

In fact, hay is a nearly universal farm product. In the United States only corn is grown on more farms or on larger total acreage. In over half the States, hay is grown on more farms than any other crop, as shown by farmers' census reports.

Our national needs for hay have never been larger. Stockmen are growing and feeding record numbers of beef cattle. Dairy cow numbers also remain high—they too eat a lot of hay, even more per head than beef cattle. For cattle and sheep—real forage specialists—hay is still the main winter standby among the different kinds of forage. This is generally true despite all that has been done to develop new and attractive ways to store and utilize forage crops.

In 1955, nearly 75 million acres of cropland will be used for growing our national hay crop, about 6 million less than the corn acreage. This extensive land use for hay crops is not unusual. Even larger acreages were required in three different years during World War II, and in one other year in the horse-powered 1920's.

Hay production in 1955 now promises to exceed all previous records with a total of 109 million tons. It is practically impossible to comprehend the volume represented in such a figure. Let's make a try by thinking about a current topic—baseball.

A friend, who is a baseball fan, also clever with a calculating machine, took the dimensions of the Yankee Stadium in New York City and figured how much baled hay it would take to fill it with a level pile 200 feet high. The figure he came up with was about 112 thousand tons.

The national hay crop, compressed into bales, would fill nearly a thousand fields the size of Yankee Stadium, piled 200 feet high. Loose hay would take about twice as much space.

Forage crops have had their fair share of attention during the swift progress of mechanization which has lightened the labor load of growing and harvesting all major farm crops.

A large selection of mowers, balers, loaders, choppers, and driers is on hand to help in haymaking and in preparing and storing hay-crop forage.

Most leading producers of farm machinery have diversified lines of hay and forage harvesting equipment. In addition, a number of smaller concerns continue to develop new machines or devices.

Cattle and Climate

The geographical location of hay production is determined very naturally by two factors: Location of cattle numbers, and climate. Location of cattle numbers and hay production are strikingly similar, especially in Northern and Western States where winter shortens the growing season. The 12 North Central States, which on January 1, 1955, had 46 percent of the Na-

tion's cattle and calves, will grow a little more than half the 1955 hay crop.

Plenty of good hay is almost synonymous with dairying, especially in the Northern States. Good evidence is shown in a recent study of the roughage fed to dairy reporters' herds in 1954.[1]

During the October–May winter feeding season, milk cows in dairy reporters' herds throughout the Nation ate an average of 2.2 tons of hay per cow. In most North Central and Northeastern States, the average was 2 to 3 tons, while in some Southern States less than 1 ton per cow was fed. These dairy cows also ate an average of 2.1 tons of silage per head during the same months. Over a fifth of this was grass silage—a new high record use of this kind of forage.

Dairy States Lead

All leading dairy States produce large amounts of hay. Wisconsin, top dairy State, usually leads in hay tonnage. Four States—Wisconsin, New York, Minnesota, and Iowa now have slightly more than one-fourth of all our milk cows. These same States in 1955 will produce about one-fourth of the Nation's hay.

Although most hay is intended for feeding on farms where grown, in some States many growers consider it a regular cash crop. From the 1954 hay crop of 104 million tons, about 14 million tons were sold—nearly one-eighth of the crop. This tonnage brought farmers about 309 million dollars.

In 10 States, all of them in the West or Southwest, hay sales usually represent one-fifth or more of the total crop. Arizona and California growers usually sell considerably more than half of the crop. Hauling the more than 3 million tons sold in California represents a large scale operation.

Visiting tourists are often surprised to see many diesel semitrailer trucks wheeling their 20-ton cargoes of hay down main highways at passenger car speed. Many of these loads start from the fertile alfalfa fields of the San Joaquin, Antelope, and Imperial Valleys and head toward the highly concentrated dairy and cattle-feeding districts near Los Angeles.

During the 12-month period ending March 31, 1955, over 828,000 tons of hay moved into the Los Angeles area alone, according to California Federal-State Market News Service reports.

Better Varieties

There are many aspects of hay production and use in which both researchers and farmers are vitally interested. Developing better varieties of the different hay crops is one; finding best mixtures of hay crops for particular areas and special uses is another.

Perhaps the most laudable ambition of all, among farmers and researchers, is to raise the general level of hay quality through better hayland management and improved harvesting methods.

It is common knowledge that much of our livestock is forced to eat some very poor hay—weedy, or cut too ripe and nearly devoid of leaves; often it is unpalatable and low in feed value.

Almost any way you look at it, hay is big. There's background reason for the young midwestern farmer's remark, as he gazed wonderingly from walls to ceiling in New York City's immense "Radio City" music hall: "Boy, wouldn't this place hold a lot of hay!"

Harold C. Phillips
Agricultural Estimates Division, AMS

[1] Rations Fed to Milk Cows, 1954. U. S. Dept. Agr., AMS–6, Jan. 1955.

"Bert" Newell's Letter

To Crop and Livestock Reporters

I like marigolds, all kinds of marigolds—big, middle-sized, and giant marigolds. Now I know they are not considered in the upper crust where flowers are concerned. In fact, lots of people turn up their noses at such plebeian posies.

What I like about marigolds is that they are so accommodating. They will grow almost any place. If you need a splash of color in a hurry, they will let you transplant them most any time.

As I have told you before, most of my agriculture is practiced in my backyard; and with all the traveling I have to do, things get neglected. So I really appreciate my old standby, the marigold, that will cover up for me when I forget a spot.

I have a very good friend, a nurseryman, who is always telling me that plants are like people and I guess I agree. Anyway, with people or plants, we get to really love those steady dependable standbys that you can always count on to come through when you really need them.

All of you know people like that. I remember old Louise who worked for us 2 days a week when our children were little, but if something came up in between times and I called her, she would invariably answer, "If'n Miss Esther needs me, I'll be there." That's something money can't buy.

Now I got off on this soliloquy because of things that have happened during this season—and in fact every season, in our work. In your State, and in every State, there is a State Statistician—you know him—who has a small staff of helpers.

In Washington there is also a staff which has the responsibility of putting together the estimates from the various States and making the national reports. Mostly they are a bunch who have come up on farms and have never learned to watch a clock, thank goodness.

Naturally there is more work to do during the crop season than in the off season, so their work is pretty much like yours. They have to get the job done when it's needed. And they get it done regardless of the weather, the clock, or money.

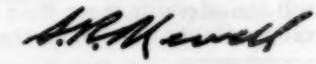
I'm awfully proud of our group because for the 30 years I have known them, their whole attitude has been just that—whatever it takes, get the job done.

Year after year our records for the State offices alone show that our field staff puts in many hours of overtime, to say nothing of the leave that is lost. And it is a rare occurrence when anyone asks for one cent of overtime pay.

In the Washington office we don't keep a complete record, but afterhours and weekend work has become such a matter of course that no one seems to pay much attention to it.

And for the gang, the facts are there and I think you are entitled to know a little about the guys and gals that are working for you. It may help too, when you get that next questionnaire, and it looks like an awful job to fill it out.

We like to think of ourselves in the field offices and here in Washington as your helpers, and like marigolds and old Louise, if you need us, we'll always be there.



S. R. Newell, *Chairman*
Crop Reporting Board, AMS

MORE OF FARMERS' "SURPLUS" CROPS ARE PUT TO GOOD USE

It's part of a farmer's nature to want to see good use made of the crops he has grown, or the products made from the basic materials he has produced.

The fact that some of these crops and products move into Government ownership, under price-support or surplus-removal programs, doesn't lessen the farmer's interest in seeing that they are put to good use.

Therefore, farmers will be interested in knowing that, during the fiscal year which ended June 30th, the United States Department of Agriculture was able to make substantial increases in the utilization of these so-called "surplus foods" that it acquired. Total distribution for the 12 months was 78 percent larger than in the previous fiscal year.

In quantities, the distribution to users of these foods at home and abroad. totaled 1,073,900,000 pounds during the 1954–55 fiscal year.

The increase is due primarily to enactment by Congress of Public Law 480, the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act. This law liberalized previous legislation, to permit greater latitude in the use of United States food stocks. Part of the increase is also due to intensified efforts by the Department to make the best possible use of the foods it acquires.

Distribution of these foods is made to schools, charitable institutions, and needy persons in such a manner as not to diminish normal expenditures for foods.

Taking a closer look at preliminary figures for the year, distribution to users in this country increased by 18 percent over the previous fiscal year. The total climbed to 493,400,000 pounds. The comparative increase in domestic distribution was held down by exhaustion of the supplies of beef and gravy, which were distributed during the 1953–54 fiscal year.

But gains were made in the donations of all other commodity groups—which included butter, cheese, dry milk, dry beans, rice, shortening, and several other items in limited amounts.

Because the supplies of beef and gravy were used up, the total quantities of food distributed to schools and institutions in this country decreased during the past year, despite increases in the amounts of other commodities donated to these groups.

At the same time, distribution to needy persons living at home increased by more than 5 times, from 37,500,000 to 198,700,000 pounds.

The foods distributed in this country went to 11 million schoolchildren, and over 1 million needy persons in charitable institutions. In addition, 2,998,600 needy persons in family units are currently certified by State agencies to receive commodities.

However, the number of people actually receiving commodities is always considerably below the number certified; in May, for example, eligible recipients totaled 2,961,610, but actual recipients totaled 2,476,878 persons.

These Government-owned foods were put to good use, just recently, when floods caused devastation throughout the Northeast. Stocks of food that were already in the flooded area, under the regular distribution program, were made available immediately for use in emergency relief. And State Governors were assured that any additional amounts they needed would be shipped promptly.

The stricken States took advantage of the offer, and good use has been made of donated foods in helping to relieve the suffering that followed the flood.

Philip V. Fleming
Agricultural Marketing Service

Here's the Wheat Outlook Highlights for 1956–57

Now that this year's wheat crop is in the bin, we can start thinking about the 1956 crop. How big will it be, how much will we carry over, and how much will farmers get for their crop?

First, acreage. On the basis of a 55-million-acre allotment we might assume an acreage of 55.5 million acres seeded for the production of grain. Second, if we assume that the yield per acre will equal the average of 15½ bushels, we come out with a crop of about 860 million bushels. This compares with a crop of about 911 million bushels this year.

Will We Use More?

How will we use this crop? Here in the United States in 1956–57 we will probably use about the same as the 608 million bushels estimated for 1955–56.

Exports cannot be forecast with any degree of certainty at this time, but if we sell abroad about the same as the 273 million bushels we exported in 1954–55, total disappearance would amount to 881 million bushels, or about 20 million bushels more than the 1956 crop. Carryover, then, on July 1, 1957, would not be very much smaller than a year earlier.

Prices of the 1956 wheat crop will be supported at not less than $1.81 per bushel. The full support will be available in the 36 commercial wheat States for farmers who comply with their individual farm acreage allotments. The minimum announced support will not be lowered, but it will be raised if a combination of changes in parity price and the supply situation calls for an increase on July 1, 1956.

In the 12 noncommercial wheat States, support prices are set by law at levels representing 75 percent of the rates calculated on the national average. In these States, acreage allotments and marketing quotas will not apply.

Select Best Varieties

A discount of 20 cents per bushel in 1956 price-support rates has been announced for 24 varieties of wheat. The varieties were designated as undesirable because of inferior milling or baking qualities. It is hoped that the discount will discourage planting of undesirable varieties and will lessen the possibility of United States wheat of inferior quality entering domestic and export channels. The announcement was made on August 12, well in advance of planting time for winter wheat, to give producers ample notice of the new plans.

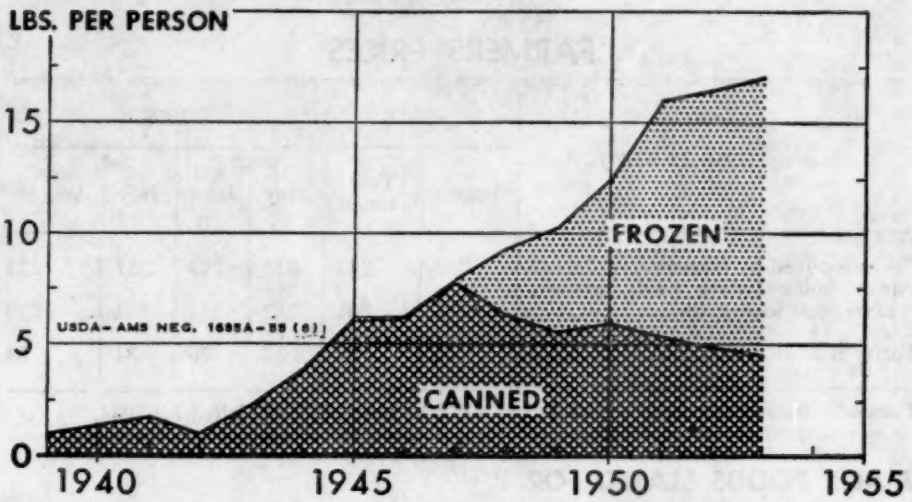
The 24 varieties listed as undesirable accounted for an estimated 31 million bushels of 1954 production, About 3.7 percent of the 1954 acreage was planted to these varieties.

Under the regulations, farmers will certify their wheat varieties much in the way they now certify that they produced the wheat and produced it in the current crop year. The identification of the variety of wheat going under price support will be the producer's responsibility based on his knowledge of the varieties he seeded and harvested. No premiums will be paid for high protein content on the undesirable varieties.

The discount is limited to 24 specified varieties in 22 specified States. The varieties are from the five major classes of wheat grown in the United States.

You can get information on the varieties designated as undesirable for your State from your County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committee office.

Use of Frozen Orange Juice Quadruples in 5 Years



Orange growers are selling more oranges, thanks to the increased popularity of frozen orange juice. Fact is, over half of Florida's 1953–54 and 1954–55 orange crops were made into frozen orange juice.

Of course, with the big upsurge in the use of frozen orange juice, people are drinking less canned orange juice, and eating less fresh oranges. But there are more people now than 5 years ago, so growers are still selling more oranges.

Since frozen orange concentrate was introduced in 1945–46, per capita consumption of this product has increased so rapidly that as early as 1950–51 it surpassed that of canned orange juice (single-strength basis). And by 1953–54, it was nearly three times that of canned orange juice.

Consumption continued to rise in the first half of the 1954–55 season and further increases—though perhaps less striking—seem likely in the next few years.

Per capita consumption of frozen orange concentrate reached a record volume of about 3.5 pounds, product weight, in 1953–54. When restored for table use, this is equivalent to about 12.5 pounds of single-strength juice.

The increase in the use of frozen concentrate was accompanied by a decrease in consumption of canned juice. But use of the concentrate increased so much that total consumption of orange juice has increased sharply.

Per capita consumption of all types of canned orange juice rose from about 2.2 pounds (single-strength) in 1943–44 to about 7.7 pounds in 1947–48. Then, as consumption of frozen orange juice gained momentum, consumption of canned orange juice dropped to about 4.5 pounds in 1953–54.

Meanwhile, consumption of the frozen increased over 12 pounds, a net increase of about 9 pounds for both kinds of juice—frozen and canned.

With the marked upward trend in per capita consumption of frozen orange juice that began in 1948–49, consumption of fresh oranges as well as that of canned orange juice declined about enough to offset the increase in frozen. However, total consumption of oranges increased because of the increase in population.

Ben H. Pubols
Agricultural Economics Division, AMS

FARMERS' PRICES

Indexes (1910–14=100)	1954		1955			
	August	Year (average)	May	June	July	August
Prices received by farmers	249	249	244	243	237	233
Parity index (prices paid, interest, taxes, and wage rates)	281	281	282	282	281	279
Parity ratio	89	89	87	86	84	84

Farmer's share of consumer's food dollar—41% in June 1955; 42% in June 1954.

MANY FOODS SLATED FOR MERCHANDISING AID

Efforts to sell farm commodities will be intensified this fall, with so many important foods in heavy supply.

USDA is working to relieve the marketing situation through its plentiful foods program—with the help of the food trades to do a good job of selling and the press to encourage consumers to buy and use more of the abundant products.

This has been a good crop year—for the feed crops that contribute to heavy supplies of livestock and poultry products, as well as for food crops.

USDA's Plentiful Foods List for September has the following foods scheduled to receive special merchandising aid: Beef, broilers and fryers, pork, rice, grapes, potatoes, fresh Italian prunes, summer vegetables, milk and other dairy products, lard, vegetable fats and oils, canned grapefruit sections, fresh and processed lemons and limes, and canned tuna.

USDA is calling attention to the foods on this list in a merchandising-information campaign to increase consumption.

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AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE
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